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January 26, 1939

2 Cobb County Boys Freed In Smyrna Disorder Case

MARIETTA, Ga., Jan. 26.—Two Cobb County youths indicted for alleged participation in racial disturbances at Smyrna last October were acquitted Wednesday by juries in Smyrna Superior Court. C. N. Padgett, Smyrna youth, was charged with "failing to disperse when ordered to do so" by a trooper, and Senator Mulkey was charged with drunkenness, other charges against him having been nolle prossed.

Marietta, Ga., Cobb County Times
January 26, 1939

Five Cleared Of Smyrna Riot Charges

Other Cases Checked To April Term Of Cobb Superior Court

Cases against 12 Cobb counts remaining on the Cobb Superior court docket in connection with the anti-negro disturbances of October 17, 18 and 19 at Smyrna have been checked to the April term, attaches said Thursday, following the acquittal of three of the indicted persons who were tried today and Wednesday.

The remaining cases were set up because of the illness of Forrest Mohon, one of riot suspects. Dr. W. H. Perkins testified Wednesday that Mohon had been suffering with influenza, and advised that it would not be safe from a health standpoint for him to appear in court.

Three Cobb juries exonerated C. N. Padgett, Senator Mulkey and Robert Hughes, who were tried separately, after only short deliberations.

Five Others Cleared

Two others, Broughton Teem and Henry Martin, were also cleared of pending charges by failure of the grand jury to indict them after demurrers, filed by defense attorneys John Dorsey and Gordon Gann, were sustained by Judge J. H. Hawkins.

The demurrers, which were also filed to the other indictments cited that the charges contained in the indictments were too general, and did not "specifically set out, or charge a criminal act under the law."

Others reindicted by the grand jury, records show, were M. D. Lewis, Forrest Mohon, Huie Gibson, Boy Purcell, Milt McClarty, Cricket Croft, Nolan Medley, Ed Gibson, Cliff Cochran, Fred Gibson, Wilmer Crowe, and Senator Mulkey.

Character Witnesses Testify

A number of character witnesses from Smyrna and vicinity testified during the trials of Padgett, Mulkey and Hughes. Witnesses for the state were comparatively few, including only one or two in each case.

Buck Miller, who plead guilty to similar charges at the November court term, is now serving a 12-month sentence at the state prison farm.

The demonstrations at Smyrna came as an aftermath of the slaying of an aged Cobb county farmer and his daughter by a negro construction worker, Willie Drew Russell, who has since been convicted of one of the crimes and electrocuted.

NEW ONES WILL BE DRAWN UP SHORTLY

MARIETTA, Ga., Feb. 2—(Special) — Indictments returned against 16 white men and youths of Cobb county, charging them with taking part in attacks on innocent Negroes and damage to their property including the burning of a school building, that continued at Smyrna, last October, for four days and nights until the disorders were abruptly ended by arrival of State troops . . . will be redrawn and presented to the county grand jury that meets next month, it has been announced by Solicitor H. G. Vandiver.

The redrawing, he said, was to correct technical defects on the basis of which Circuit Judge J. H. Hawkins recently sustained demurrers to original indictments in several of the cases. The principal technical defect insisted on by defense counsel, in the original indictments, was that they failed to show any criminal acts because charges contained in them were general and not specific.

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18 Mob Suspects Will Be Tried

MARIETTA, Ga. — (SNS) — Eighteen young white Cobb County residents, who were indicted for "acts of violence" that grew out of disturbances last October at nearby Smyrna, face trial at the January term of Superior Court which opened Monday.

The anti-Negro riots followed the slaying of an aged white farmer and his daughter. Willie Drew Russell, construction worker, was recently electrocuted at Tattnall Prison for the slayings. He allegedly confessed the crime.

Charlotte, N. C., News
May 29, 1939

Monroe Is Terrorized As Negro CCC Camp Enrollees Stage Riot

MONROE. — A near riot was avoided here last night when some 75 enrollees of the Local Negro CCC camp marched through town, breaking automobile glasses, throwing rocks, turning over garbage cans, and generally instilling terror through certain parts of town.

The trouble is said to have started when one of the enrollees claimed to have been "rocked" in North Monroe. He returned to the camp, gathered up a bunch of other Negroes and set out to "paint the town red." They left the camp, located in the southern part of Monroe. Marched down the street, forcing cars to stop. Breaking car windows with rocks, kicking over cans and cursing all and sundry.

They went on through town and over into North Monroe where they continued their tactics, forcing families to remain indoors, and creating disturbances for an hour.

One white boy is said to have received a bad cut on the face when hit by a rock.

The Negroes finally returned to the camp, where most of the remaining members were getting ready to start out. However, camp officers and other finally got them under control.

The camp was quiet this morning and the boys went out to work as usual.

Meanwhile, many citizens this morning were up in arms and it is said that action will be taken by city officials to have the camp removed as soon as possible. Precautions are being taken to handle any future trouble although camp officials say that do not expect any.

The local camp was first established here for white enrollees but about two years ago it was changed into a camp for Negroes. There are around 150 enrollees at present and last night was the first time any trouble had been caused.

Riot Narrowly Averted In Richmond, Va.

Young Lady Says White Youth Slapped Her

girl had been told what to do if she wanted the white man arrested

News that Miss Jones had been assaulted spread on Second Street until the crowd had grown to several hundred inside and outside of the cafe. As they increased Gilmer rushed out of the back of the cafe and was sent home in a taxi.

When the crowd found out that Gilmer had been sent home in a taxi some of the number hurled threats at the proprietor. They milled about the place outside discussing the matter. Later some one

RICHMOND, Va.—A riot was narrowly averted on crowded Second Street Saturday night when a white youth slapped a young lady in Dixie Inn Cafe following an altercation between the couple. Immediately after the incident the cafe was crowded with sympathizers some of whom threatened to seize the white man and carry him outside and beat him. Only the quick arrival of the police prevented trouble.

Bystanders accused L. Gilmer, white, who was employed at the cafe, of slapping Miss Beatrice Jones, 19, of 935 Hickory Street, in the face. The young woman began working at the cafe when L. Parker, the owner, opened the place about four months ago.

According to Miss Jones, she returned to the cafe Saturday night after making some purchases, to leave her packages while she went to a theatre. The youth asked her what she had in the packages and when she refused to tell him, ordered her not to leave them behind the counter. She ignored the request and left.

When she returned, Gilmer had opened her packages, she said, and had been reading her newspaper. Miss Jones criticized him for the act and reached down to pick up her packages. Gilmer, she said, shoved her and then slapped her. As the girl started to defend herself, a bystander led her away.

Several youths threatened to avenge the assault, but Gilmer remained behind the counter until the police arrived. The white youth wasn't arrested but police said the

Newberry, S. C. Observer
April 28, 1939

RIOT OCCURRED ON CIRCUS DAY; ONLY ONE IN CARPETBAG DAYS

Clash Between Whites and Blacks Quelled With Aid of Federal Troops, But Not Before Democratic Negro Policeman Killed.

Federal soldiers had to come to Newberry several weeks before the Fifty-sixth New York regiment occupied Newberry College building, the contingent previously being Company E, Twenty-fifth Ohio regiment, which remained until 1867. Other troops came until certain details of the Seventh cavalry, without their mounts, under command of Major Stewart and Lieutenants Miller and Anderson. They occupied the Nance home, remaining in the town until 1875, going to a fort in the far west.

Occupying towns in the South, Federal troops were sent to prevent inter-racial clashes between white people and negroes or to arrange settlement in labor disputes. Only several times was this discipline necessary.

One of these occasions occurred in November, 1874, when a big crowd appeared in the town to see John Robinson's Circus, while John I. Houseal was chief of police of the town. A riot was precipitated at that time between a group of young white men and negroes massed at the intersection of Main and McKibben streets. Capt. W. H. Webb saved the life of J. P. Hardy by dragging him into the cellar on the tramway as negroes had forced him to retreat.

At this juncture Chief of Police Houseal proceeded to the federal garrison and secured a detachment of troops to come to his assistance. They readily quelled the mob of negroes especially, but not before William Bluford, negro policeman, Democrat, one of two negroes of the town who was given representation on the police force, was killed.

The writer, as carrier for The

Highlights of Negro History

East St. Louis Massacre: Its Roots

We cannot say that all the people who took part in the East St. Louis holocaust were underworld characters. They were people ruined in soul by the persistent voice of prejudiced leadership. The Thomas Dixons, who for the money to be made from writing books and the political position had by impassioned misrepresentation turned the hearts of the white masses against innocent colored people, was the cause of their willingness to torture and murder them.

The leaders of these agitations raised their hands in horror but the intelligent of the nation were not deceived. These agitators were responsible for the dead at Houston, where the methods that they had advocated were tried out by incited and infuriated black soldiers. These race haters had sowed the wind and the nation reaped the whirlwind of this ignominious shame. No wonder that paralysis and insanity hold some of these race haters today.

Again the East St. Louis massacre was the result of discrimination in the administration of justice. It was failure on the part of the police to give protection to the helpless that made it easy for the lawless to realize what they could do. Almost all race riots have come out of communities that have retrograded in enforcement of law and where vice has run wide open.

An automobile loaded with white thugs traversed the Negro district at high speed, its occupants shooting into Negro homes. Following them came an automobile filled with East St. Louis policemen drawn to the vicinity by the shots. The dazed and excited Negroes, thinking it the return of the same gang, fired upon the policemen, killing one officer and wounding another. The ringleaders among the colored were sentenced to 14 years in the penitentiary. What penalty fell upon the white assassins?

As a cover for the deeds of this lower white man, stories were circulated that a church bell had rung in the Negro section and that there had been a military formation. Had every church

bell rung and had every Negro stood in defensive formation, what fair-minded white man could have blamed them? Were not the white guardsmen of the state fraternizing with the mob?

Punishment should fall upon any man who shoots an officer, yet the motive can entirely alter the case. Negro leadership should be swift and effective in teaching their people how to secure police protection by arming themselves as deputies to strike for race defense within bounds of the law. If they cannot secure protection, as happened at East St. Louis, then energetic appeals should be sent forth to the powers that be of the nation.

There have been times of race peril in Oklahoma City, when Negroes armed to prevent the lynching of Negroes, but this defense was headed and planned by men shrewd and alert to send word to the authorities that these men were armed to support the law and they were thus accepted. The Negro must be taught how to defend himself and in cool times more ought to be said to him of doing this in sane ways. In Oklahoma City it was not leadership but plan Negroes of the ranks who lay all night upon their arms.

Witnesses testified that in East St. Louis, soldiers assisted in setting fires, and that some of the policemen shot Negroes down in cold blood. Guns and ammunition were taken away from the Negroes of the section, thus rendering them the more easy prey. One peculiar phase that arose out of these roots was the fact that fair Negroes could pass over into the white sections and buy arms and ammunition for their darker brethren.

Among the whites in East St. Louis, a mob of 35 seized the ammunition of a pawn shop and looted the cases of jewelry and watches. Policemen handed over their revolvers to rioters. The fire fighting companies came from St. Louis to put out the burning buildings but their hose was cut. Many homes near the Negro district were destroyed.

Many of the soldiers had come from districts where Negroes were not allowed to live. How could Negro life be protected under such circumstances. Only by a change of sentiment in white masses.

The mobs were too cowardly to invade the thickly settled Negro districts, where Afro-Americans remained armed, but the mob vented their fury on isolated spots and helpless victims. How many men, women and children were shot, tortured or burned to death will never be known. Three hundred and twelve houses were partially or totally destroyed. The property loss was \$400,000. One policeman testified that the mob was made up of respectable people who looked like the insane escaped from madhouses. A large element of people today are insane.

Here was the average American at work. The average American inflamed by lurid headlines, uninstructed by our silent pulpits on the subject of justice and human brotherhood; the average citizen who nightly sits in the moving picture show to see the cheapness of life represented in pictures, where the cracking of revolvers and the taking of human life are commonplaces. How easy it is to do the thing repeatedly seen, and at last to feel that it is right.

One journal pertinently asked: 'Why should not bayonet and bullet be used against men who wantonly use torch, bullet and bludgeon, against the black man, regardless of sex, age, or character? Better that a thousand murderers be killed in support of law and order, than that one innocent citizen be killed by a lawless mob.' And that is the sentiment slowly settling into Aryan thought.

The Associated Press then spectacularized before the youth of America, a reeking Pole who stood in East St. Louis that night with bloody ax in hand boasting that he had slain 17 Negroes and that ere morn he would slay more. It would not have been difficult to have apprehended this murderer, but he was erected as a justifiable champion of "white supremacy." In fact one journal closed its recital of unprecedented bru-

talities with the words: "All of this is the natural consequence of race disturbance."